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MOTORCYCLE JARGON

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MOTORCYCLE JARGON

A Glossary

This glossary was compiled by personnel of the Riverside, California District Office, with assistance from Mr. Bill Adams, American Motorcycle Association District 37, and Mr. Bob Sanford of Cycle News.

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AMERICAN MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION (AMA)

A nation-wide organization serving as a unifying force for the country's motorcyclists. It is based in Worthington, Ohio, and the organization is divided into 40 "districts" within the United States. The primary function of the AMA is sanctioning motorcycle clubs and establishing the rules for the various types of motorcycle racing.

AMATEUR

(See RIDER CLASSIFICATIONS)

BASH PLATE

A metal plate fastened to the frame underneath the engine preventing rocks and other debris from damaging the engine. It is also referred to as a skid plate.

BAWL GARDS

Small leather pads fitted on the gas tanks which serve as protection to riders in the event they hit a hard bump and come down the wrong way.

BENCH RACING

Get-togethers for discussing a race after it is ended. It usually involves a lot of beer and B.S.

BOARDTRACK RACING

A form of racing very popular from 1908 to 1926, involving a track of fitted wooden planks. The race began from a massed start with the fastest rider winning. Some races were as long as 300 miles on a heavily banked 1/16 to 2 mile track.

BROAD SLIDE

A term used to describe the sideways movement of a motorcycle as it slides or skids while going around curves or corners. This is a technique developed by riders enabling them to maintain higher speeds in negotiating turns and corners.

CC (CUBIC CENTIMETER)

Identifies the size of an engine cylinder displacement. Generally, the more "cc's" identified with an engine, the greater the power of the machine. In racing events, "cc's" are used to establish different racing classes.

CHECK POINT

A course verification location where race officials are "spotted" to verify that riders have gone over a prescribed course or terrain. In desert races, several check points are used, some unknown to riders while others have been previously "advertised." In the Enduro type of racing, check points are also used to determine a rider's time over a measured distance.

CHOPPER

A motorcycle that has been considerably modified not so much for performance but for appearance. Generally, the front forks are extended, custom gas tanks and other frills and fringes are added.

COW TRAILING

Off-road riding for pleasure; no competition involved.

DESERT RIDER

Anyone who rides in the desert, although it is often used to refer to only those who race in the desert.

DISTRICT 37

One of the American Motorcycle Association's forty districts. District 37 is the Los Angeles area. Organized motorcycle clubs within this area belong to this district. Regularly scheduled meetings are held to discuss and establish policy.

DRAG RACE

An acceleration race over a measured distance in a straight line, usually from a standing start. Fastest rider is the winner. The race is on a $\frac{1}{4}$-mile strip with an extra strip added to allow stopping. Electronic timing devices at the end of each quarter measure the terminal speed and elapsed time from start to finish. The race can be rider against the clock or it may involve two-man matches.

ENDO

(See HEADER)

ENDURO

An event involving an all-terrain run for regularity and endurace over an unknown course which is long, open-ended and marked by various means (flagging, ribbon, lime, signs) and varies in distance from 150 to 500 miles. The course includes desert, mountain and forest trails as well as washes and river

ENDURO (cont.)

crossings with some paved roads. The event is clocked for an average overall speed so conformity to set the average speed is the basis for the runs. Rider is given a set number of points at the start of the event. A set number of riders (2 to 6) are set off at each interval (1 to 2 minutes apart). Points are deducted for being late as well as being early at check points. Rider with most points remaining at the finish is the winner.

EUROPEAN SCRAMBLES

A race on a closed circuit involving several right and left hand turns. It is called a motocross in Europe. The circuit is on a dirt course of at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, laid out on a dirt course on bumpy and hilly terrain with a few high-speed straight-aways. The fastest rider in the field is the winner by being the first to finish a set number of laps or going the farthest in a set time.

EXPANSION CHAMBER

An exhaust pipe on a two-stroke engine, specifically designed to allow maximum power. Good chambers can increase power by as much as 4 horsepower above stock (standard) exhaust pipes.

EXPERT CLASS

(See RIDER CLASSIFICATIONS)

FIELD MEET

A meet involving a series of events to test driving skills. The events involve contests such as obstacle courses, quick turns, acceleration tests, braking ability, etc., resembling contests in road-run rendezvous runs. The events are held in large, open fields or parking lots. Winners are those with the most ability in each event. Field meets are also referred to as gymkhanas in England and Europe.

FILTRON FILTER

A special air cleaner to the carburetor, manufactured by Filtron Products, Inc., using dense foam rubber to keep dust and dirt out of the engine. Popular with the desert riders.

FISHTAIL

A swing and sway motion of the rear portion of a motorcycle as it weaves from side to side.

FLAT TRACK

A closed oval circuit race over a $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 mile track. The track is usually on dirt or clay, graded smooth and packed hard. Involves various left turns. Race begins with a massed start, the first man to finish a set number of laps is the winner.

FOUR STROKE

The number of movements required for an engine piston to complete one cycle. The piston must go up twice and down twice for each power-producing internal combustion.

FULL LOCK SLIDE

Sliding around a corner sideways, with the motorcycle in a "locked" position (brakes are engaged).

GIRLING

A brand name for front and rear suspension systems used by desert riders.

GRAND PRIX

In this part of the world, this is used to refer to a scrambles-type closed circuit race that includes varied terrain and portions of paved roads. It can be run for a set number of laps or on a time basis. The fastest rider wins.

GRASS TRACK

A closed circuit similar to a flat track but held on a grass course. The circuit is oval or kidney shaped, 600 to 800 yard long with left turning involved. The race is from a massed start, first to finish a set number of laps, is the winner. This type of racing is very popular in England.

GROOVE

A rut or trail that has developed on a track or course as a result of numerous riders following the same line. On a flat track, it takes on the characteristics of a paved surface and becomes the preferred riding line as opposed to the loose outside surfaces.

GUNK

A brand name for a type of solvent (degreaser) used to clean engines and other types of equipment.

GYMKHANA

(See FIELD MEET)

HARE AND HOUND

A desert race over a long unseen course marked by lime, ribbons, signs, etc. The course is laid out in 2 or more loops, varying from 10 to 30 miles each and ending at the start-finish line. Competitors take off from a massed start heading toward a smoke signal set off in the distance to show the direction of the run. The fastest man to finish wins, provided he has made it through all the check points. Other long distance desert races are sometimes called "Hare and Hound" races.

HARE SCRAMBLES

A race similar to a Hare and Hound except it involves only one loop being used more than once. Both races involve rough terrain with numerous left and right turns. Again the fastest man wins, provided he has made all the check points.

HEADER

A spill with the rider going head-first over the handlebars. Also called an "Endo."

HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION

In racing classification, motorcycles of more than 250 cc displacement.

HILL CLIMB

A straight-line race for elapsed time up a short and steep dirt hill. Rider is timed from a stretch, beginning at the bottom of the hill. The rider with the shortest elapsed time, finishing from a standing start, is the winner.

HILL CLIMB (ROAD)

An uphill, open-circuit race over a paved uphill road. A single rider races the clock, being timed from the bottom to the top. The race is 1 to 3 miles long. The rider with the shortest elapsed time is the winner.

HI-SIDING

Description of a crash that occurs when more than one rider rounds a curve and the rider on the outside is forced to crash into the outer side of the curve.

HOG

An euphemism for Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

HOOP-TIES

A series of bumps on a course or trail that causes a motorcycle and the rider to bounce continuously. Also called hoop-dee-doo's.

HOT SHOE

A pseudonym for a good, fast rider.

ICE RACE

A left-turning "flat track" race on ice. The race is about 400 yards long. It basically pits man against man, first to finish wins. Motorcycles are equipped with spiked tires.

ISDT (INTERNATIONAL SIX-DAY TRAILS)

An event held annually, where teams test their skills at various types of riding. The biggest competition is between countries, with the winning team hosting the event in their country the following year. There are other teams competing including those sponsored by motorcycle manufacturers, riding clubs, etc. Each day features a separate type of test, ranging from out-and-out speed tests to endurance tests. Riders lose points for not performing as proficiently as required. Gold medals are awarded to only those riders with perfect scores.

KNOBBY TIRE

A motorcycle tire having protruding chunks of rubber in a checkerboard pattern instead of regular tread which helps gain traction in loose dirt or sand.

LEATHERS

Riding clothes made of leather that help protect a rider.

LE MANS START

A type of start used in various races and now frequently used in desert races. Motorcycles are parked at the starting line, engines are turned off and the riders are

LE MANS START (cont.)

lined up at a designated line 100 feet away. At a signal, the riders run to their machines, start engines and race off.

LIGHTWEIGHT DIVISION

Generally refers to motorcycles under 250 cc displacement. Some groups have ultra-lightweight classes for motorcycles under 100 cc displacement.

LIME (LIME MARKS)

Lime in powdered form is used to show visitors the way to the start of a race, mark long courses for the racers, and designate danger markings. Lime is distributed at periodic points and if the rider is going in the proper direction, the lime should be on his right side. It is also used for certain signals. Three strips of lime a couple feet apart indicates a turn, also danger ahead. Six stripes means a road crossing, etc.

LOOP

A complete lap on a designated course. Same as a closed-circuit course.

MASSED START

A method of starting a race. Motorcycles are lined up abreast and at a given signal, all machines take off. In desert events, there usually is a different start of each class of motorcycles competing in the event.

MINI BIKE

A small motorcycle, usually around 50 cc displacement. There are no definite limitations as to size of the bike or the engine.

MOTOBALL

The game of field hockey on motorcycles. It involves a grass, rectangular field on which two teams kick a round ball around, each team attempting to score goals against the opposing team.

MOTOCROSS

A race around a closed-circuit course usually involving very rough terrain. The race is between $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 miles long. The riders compete in classes on the basis of rider proficiency and motorcycle size. Each class of riders compete on 2 or 3 separate occasions (motos), with points awarded in each moto to the winning riders. (Example: 400 points for first place, 300 points for second place, etc.) At the end of a specified number of motos, the rider with the highest number of points in his class is the winner.

MOTORCYCLE

A motor-driven, two wheeled vehicle.

NOVICE CLASS

(See RIDER CLASSIFICATION)

NUMBER PLATE

A lightweight oval or rectangular piece of metal or plastic attached to the front

NUMBER PLATE (cont.)

of the motorcycle (sometimes attached to the sides). Numbers are painted on this plate for rider identification. Numbers are sometimes arbitrary, although they are frequently issued by the sponsoring organizations or by the motorcycle club sponsoring the event. The AMA also honors the top riders in the country by awarding numbers to these riders. (See POINTS)

OPEN EXPERT CLASS

A riding class of Expert riders competing with motorcycles of unlimited displacement.

PIT AREA

The area where riders and mechanics store and service their motorcycles. In desert races, this area is also used by the families accompanying the riders and becomes the camp area for both the riders and spectators.

POINTS

System of scoring and selection of the top riders in the country. A certain number of points are earned by winners at each desert event. At the end of the year, the rider with the highest number of points is declared the top rider in the country or district. Along with other honors, he is granted the right to use the number "1" on his number plate for the following year. By the same token, the next numbers are also assigned to the riders in accordance with their standings.

POKER RUN

A riding event where each rider is given a playing card at each of 5 check points. Rider with the best poker hand is the winner.

PRODUCTION MACHINE

A motorcycle that has not been modified in any way, shape or form.

RAKE PLATE

A plate connecting the handlebars to the front fork for the purpose of extending the overall wheelbase by one to two inches. Also called a triple clamp.

RALLY

(See ROAD RUN)

REGULARITY RUN

A time-speed-distance road run (rally) for motorcycles over public paved road. Riders are furnished maps showing directions and distances. The purpose of the race is to set an average time. Penalty points are assessed for being late or early at any of several check points.

RING-DING

A slang term for a motorcycle with a two-stroke engine.

RISERS

A term given to high handlebars used in street motorcycles.

RIDER CLASSIFICATIONS

Basically, riders belonging to the AMA are separated into two groups:

RIDER CLASSIFICATIONS (cont.)

Professional and Sportsman. Within each of these groups, there are three divisions based on riding proficiency: Novice, Amateur and Expert - the Novice being the least accomplished. (An Expert Sportsman is less accomplished theoretically than the Novice Professional.) In non-AMA events, riders are generally classified in the same manner, although they are sometimes called Juniors, Intermediates and Seniors. Recently, some changes were made in re-naming the divisions. However, the categories remain the same.

ROAD RACE

A speed race on a closed, paved course. It involves left and right turns on pavement, varying in length from several hundred yards to 37 miles, sometimes on public roads and sometimes on special tracks. Longer races up to 12 hours are "endurance" races. The race pits man against man, with the first to finish or having the shortest time, winning.

ROAD RUN (RALLY)

Primarily a social, fun-type event, involving a "run" down the road to a rendezvous point. It is usually held along public roads involving several games such as "passing the potato," "eating dangling hot dogs," etc. Prizes are given to game winners as well as for the best dressed rider, who came the farthest to participate, etc.

ROLLER

A type of cam used in 4-cycle engines, utilizing roller bearings to eliminate drag.

RUN

A term often used instead of "race" or "event."

SAND RACE

A short race on sand usually held on a beach. Riders race from one end of a straight narrow strip to the other, make a quick turn and return to the starting line. The fastest rider is the winner.

SHORT STROKE

Refers to the length of piston travel from bottom dead center to the top dead center and is indicative of a piston stroke which is shorter than the diameter of the cylinder.

SHORT TRACK

A race, about 1/10 to 1/8 mile long, on an oval dirt or cement track, involving left turns. Fastest in the field is the winner.

SIDEHACK

A motorcycle that has been modified by adding a third wheel to the side, allowing room for a passenger between the two rear wheels. "Hack" races are becoming popular because of the cumbersome nature of the vehicle.

SKID PLATE
(See BASH PLATE)

SMOKE BOMB
A signal used to start desert races. It is something like a smoke signal, ignited a few miles from the starting line showing the general direction of the race and the beginning of the marked course.

SPARK ARRESTOR
A screening device placed inside an exhaust pipe eliminating the discharge of sparks and decreasing wild fire danger.

SPEED TRIAL
A race against the clock for top terminal speed over a given distance. It involves long straight stretches of hard packed terrain or large banked tracks. Man races against the clock for top speed. Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah is famous for world record runs.

SPEEDWAY
An oval track, 1/4 to 1/3 mile long with cinder or dirt cushion, involving left turns. Fastest rider is the winner.

SQUARE FOUR
A type of 4-cycle, 4-cylinder motorcycle engine that is no longer being manufactured.

TORQUE

A force or combination of forces that produces or tends to produce a twisting or rotating motion. In motorcycle circles it simply means how much power is produced by the engine.

TRIALS (MULTI-DAY)

An all-terrain reliability and regularity event from two to six days long. It is an "enduro" European style. Roads, trails, mountains, rivers, bogs, etc., make up an unseen, marked course several hundred miles long. Penalty points are assessed to the rider for not conforming to the time schedule. Bonus points are awarded for excelling in special test sections: hill climbs, scrambles, acceleration-braking, road racing, etc.

TRIALS (OBSERVED)

An agility contest over extremely rough terrain. It is occasionally called "English Trials." This difficult, off-road circut is separated into sections - hills, bogs, river-crossings, etc. - each one under observation by a referee. Each rider must maintain constant forward progress through each section without touching the ground with his feet. Time schedule conformity is sometimes an added factor. The contest does not involve speed so much as steadiness, style and skill.

TROPHY

Award given in sportsman competition. Trophies are given to winners of individual classes in each racing event.

TT SCRAMBLES

A road race on relatively smooth, hard-packed, graded dirt having at least one jump. The race involves higher speeds than found in other forms of scrambles racing. Circuit contains several right and left turns. First riders to finish from a massed start are the winners.

TWO STROKE

Refers to the number of up and down movements made by an engine piston to complete one power cycle.

WHEELIE

Riding along on only the back wheel with the front wheel lifted up in the air.

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